intensification of research on development of commercially viable hybrid technology for achieving higher yield, development of molecular techniques and their application in crop breeding with emphasis on genetic engineering etc.

Fall in soil nutrition in Assam

1706. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that there has been an inordinate fall in soil nutrition factors in Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action-plan of Government towards controlling the use of urea and banning the use of other pesticides to ensure food safety and nutrition security in the State of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) An increasing trend of depletion of nutrients has been reported in soil in Assam as brought out below:-

Nutrient	Negative balance (in metric tonnes) in 1998-99	Negative balance (in metric tonnes) in 2005-06
N	1,35,257	2,14,763
P2O5	65,876	59,967
K2O	1,67,650	2,35,576

(c) The Government has taken steps to reduce the imbalance in use of chemical fertilizers including urea as well as to reduce use of pesticides in the State of Assam keeping in view the food safety and nutrition security. Emphasis is given on balanced use of chemical fertilizers, Integrated Nutrient Management, organic farming and Integrated Pest Management for control of pests with judicious use of pesticides.

Hike in prices of corn

1707. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether corn prices are rising;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of corn exported to each country during the last three years; and

(d) the role of Andhra Pradesh farmers producing corn in this regard?